

**BUTTE COUNTY 4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM**  
**4-H Horse Project Proficiency Program**  
**A Member's Guide**

**OVERVIEW**

The **4-H Horse Project Proficiency Program** helps you learn what you need to know about your 4-H Project. Your 4-H Project Leader will assist you in setting and achieving your goals. Through your 4-H Project, you will learn animal care basics, good management practices and record keeping. You will also learn about the size and scope of the animal industry as it relates to your 4-H Project.

There are many resources to help you learn more about your project:

- The [4-H Publications Catalog](#) lists a variety of project materials and resources recommended for use in your project.
- The **4-H Educational Resources Lending Library** at the Butte County 4-H Office includes other books, videos and reference materials that can be checked out by members and leaders.
- Check to see if there is a breeders' organization in your community that conducts educational activities and shows. Local breeders are excellent sources of help and information.

There are five levels in the 4-H Rabbit Project Proficiency Program. You may choose how many levels you wish to complete:

**Level 1 – Explorer** You begin to learn about many different aspects of raising animals.

**Level 2 – Producer** You practice and refine the many skills involved in learning about and raising animals.

**Level 3 – Consumer** You become an experienced animal raiser.

**Level 4 – Leader** Allows you to show your own leadership potential.

**Level 5 – Researcher** You carry out a demonstration or experiment on some aspect of your project.

As you work through the 4-H Project Proficiency Program, your 4-H Project Leader will date and initial each skill item as you complete it. When all items in a proficiency level are completed, your 4-H Project Leader will notify the Community Club Leader. A 4-H Project Proficiency Program Pin and First Year Leg will be awarded for Level 1. Previous Year Leg will be returned when the next Level is awarded for Levels 2-5.

# HORSE PROFICIENCY

## Level 1 – Explorer

*Each proficiency will be dated and initialed by your project leader.*

Date Completed                      4-H Member's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Leader's Initials

4-H Club: \_\_\_\_\_                      Project Leader: \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Give 5 safety rules and a reason why each is important.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Explain how hand-feeding treats to horses can get your fingers nipped.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Identify the parts of the horse from diagram or live animal.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Identify the parts of tack (saddle, bridle, etc.).
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Explain the nutritional requirements of a horse (How, when, what, how much to feed).
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Demonstrate how to approach and lead a horse correctly and safely.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Demonstrate 5 grooming aids and how to properly use them.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Demonstrate how to properly tie a horse, including how to tie a quick release knot.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Develop a feeding plan for a horse, explain the feed you chose.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Demonstrate how to clean a stall, clean the stable area and stable chores.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. Demonstrate the proper basic attire for riding, and why each should be worn.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. Demonstrate how to properly and safely halter, bridle and saddle a horse.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. Demonstrate how to hold the reins when riding Western and/or English.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. Describe the four natural aids and how to properly use them.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. Submit management records for a minimum of 90 days that indicate how often you provided fresh water, clean feed, clean housing and general care for a horse.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 16. Share one aspect of your project with someone not in your project.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 17. Show how to check and adjust your equipment before riding, and explain why.

**KEEP IN YOUR RECORD BOOK WITH PROJECT RECORD**

# HORSE PROFICIENCY

## Level 2 – Producer

*Each proficiency will be dated and initialed by your project leader.*

Date Completed                      4-H Member's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Leader's Initials

4-H Club: \_\_\_\_\_                      Project Leader: \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Give 5 safety rules for trail riding.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Explain why you should not let a horse eat grass on trail rides.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Design a simple Western, English or Dressage ring pattern.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Describe or demonstrate how to sanitize equipment.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Demonstrate competency in showmanship for your animal.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Complete a tack check on both sides, explain why you are adjusting the tack.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Identify three types of bits, and explain why they are used and how they work.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Display your animal or an aspect of your project outside of your project group.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Demonstrate how to clean a saddle and bridle.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Mount with control and without disturbing the horse. (Horse may be held by assistant.  
Very small riders may mount from a safe mounting block.)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. Dismount safely with control and prepare the horse to lead.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. Adjust and mount your stirrup to the proper length.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. Ride at a walk with proper position and control.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. Ride at a trot around the rail with proper position and control.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. Halt from the walk and the trot on command, with control.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 16. Ride turns, and reverse at the walk and trot, with control.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 17. Demonstrate proper control while:
  - A. Ride twice around the ring at a jog or trot without breaking the gait.
  - B. Keep the proper distance when riding in a group or on the trail.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 18. Show how to properly cool out a hot horse.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 19. Demonstrate how to ride uphill and downhill.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 20. Explain what to do if you see a hazard like a hole or a fire.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 21. Demonstrate jumping position at a walk and trot in good balance.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 22. Ride over practice poles or cavaletti in jumping position.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 23. Attend or audit a horse show or educational equine clinic.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 24. Help someone else by sharing your knowledge or by giving away a product from your project to demonstrate positive citizenship.

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# HORSE PROFICIENCY

## Level 3 – Consumer

*Each proficiency will be dated and initialed by your project leader.*

Date Completed                      4-H Member's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Leader's Initials

4-H Club: \_\_\_\_\_                      Project Leader: \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Identify the parts of the hoof, and explain proper hoof care.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Demonstrate how to ride over or through a simple trail obstacle (a creek, stepping poles or a muddy spot.)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Explain how to recognize colic and founder and how to treat both.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Design an advertisement or a marketing strategy for your project.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Ride with good position, balance and control for:
- A. Walk, without stirrup or bareback.
  - B. Sitting trot or jog, without stirrups or bareback.
  - C. Posting trot on correct diagonal, demonstrating change of diagonals. (optional western)
  - D. Canter or lope in both directions on the correct lead, identifying lead.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Show proper form and control while riding through the following movements:
- A. Circle at sitting trot or jog
  - B. Figure 8, large or small
  - C. Smooth transitions
    - 1. Walk to trot or jog
    - 2. Walk to canter or lope
    - 3. Trot or jog to stop
    - 4. Canter or lope to walk
  - D. Serpentine or alternate riding pattern
  - E. Change of direction on the diagonal (optional western)
  - F. Turnback on the rail (western only)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Ride with proper position and balance at the walk and trot or jog:
- A. Jumping position (English) or standing (Western)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Demonstrate how to pass another rider and how to handle your horse when being passed.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Explain and demonstrate:
- A. Direct flexion (getting the horse to flex in the pole and jaw).
  - B. Correcting a faulty head set or head position.
  - C. Proper use of artificial aids (crop or bat, dressage whip, spurs).
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Complete a ring evaluation, dressage evaluation, program ride, or one of the western performance patterns.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. Create a conditioning and feed program for a horse. If possible, carry out the conditioning of a horse according to your program.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. Alone or with your group, plan and complete a community service activity related to your project.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. Execute the following, using correct aids (optional English):
- A. Stop from the lope (need not be a sliding stop).
  - B. Pivot on the hindquarters
  - C. Roll-back
  - D. Figure 8 with simple change of leads at center.
  - D. Back one horse length in a straight line.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. Complete a gymkhana pattern. (cloverleaf barrel race, pole bending, keyhole pattern or flag race or other gymkhana pattern)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. Demonstrate two training methods of holding the reins.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 16. Invite a guest speaker to one of your meetings and introduce them to the group.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 17. Design an advertisement or a marketing strategy for your animal.

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# HORSE PROFICIENCY

## Level 4 – Leader

*Each proficiency will be dated and initialed by your project leader.*

Date Completed                      4-H Member's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Leader's Initials

4-H Club: \_\_\_\_\_                      Project Leader: \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Serve as Junior or Teen leader in this project for one year.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Assist younger members in designing and constructing needed equipment or learning proper riding techniques.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Prepare and use teaching materials at project meetings.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Develop and put on a demonstration, judging event or train a junior team for a judging activity.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Speak on a project-based subject before an organization other than your 4-H group.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Assist at a show as a clerk, secretary, recorder, assistant to the judge, ring master or with set-up, registration, etc.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Teach younger members about learning a specific topic in the project.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Develop your own special project related activity. Chart your own progress, plan the activities, analyze successes and problems, and report on your accomplishments to your club.

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## HORSE PROFICIENCY

### Level 5 – Researcher

*Each proficiency will be dated and initialed by your project leader.*

Date Completed                      4-H Member's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Leader's Initials

4-H Club: \_\_\_\_\_                      Project Leader: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ 1. Report on the results of a demonstration comparing measurable differences in management procedure. (experiment) Send a copy to the 4-H office.

\_\_\_\_\_ 2. Prepare a paper of 300 words or more on one of the following topics:

Management of horses.

Feeds, feeding, and nutrition.

Diseases, prevention and control, and general sanitation.

Markets and methods of marketing.

Reproduction, breeding, and genetics.

By-product preparation for market, how marketed, and used.

Keeping and using records as a basis for improving your animal project.

Other (topic must be pre-approved by project leader or 4-H staff)

\_\_\_\_\_ 3. Prepare a speech or illustrated talk to orally summarize your findings and present at a club, project meeting or other educational event. Send a copy to the 4-h office.

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## ***REQUIREMENTS:***

For members to qualify for proficiency awards they must complete all the requirements below and give a 4-H presentation during the 4-H year.

- Have up-to-date and complete enrollment packet and enrollment fees on file at the 4-H office.
- Attend 80% of club and project meetings or meet requirements of a county-wide project.
- Members must provide 4-H Records to the club leader for project completion verification.
- Records must include **Personal Development Report** and **Annual Project Report** form for each project a member is applying for a Proficiency Award, and the completed Proficiency Form.